

IN THE CLAIMS

1 (Currently amended). An IFN- $\gamma$  production inducing agent which consists essentially of an effective ingredient capable of inducing IFN- $\gamma$  production by immunocompetent cells, said effective ingredient ~~consisting of~~ being an interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, having the following physicochemical properties:

(1) Molecular weight

19,000 $\pm$ 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE);

(2) Isoelectric point (pI)

4.8  $\pm$  1.0 on chromatofocusing; and

(3) Biological activity

Inducing the interferon- $\gamma$  production by immunocompetent cells; ~~and~~

~~(4) Partial amino acid sequence~~

~~Possessing a part or the whole of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr.~~

2 (Currently amended). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and an effective ingredient capable of inducing IFN- $\gamma$  production by

Appln. No.: 09/373,230  
Amdt. dated August 19, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of March 21, 2003

immunocompetent cells, said effective ingredient ~~consisting of~~  
~~being~~ an interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing protein,  
also known as IGIF and IL-18, having the following  
physicochemical properties:

(1) Molecular weight

19,000 $\pm$ 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and  
sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel  
electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE);

(2) Isoelectric point (pI)

4.8  $\pm$  1.0 on chromatofocusing; and

(3) Biological activity

Inducing the interferon- $\gamma$  production by  
immunocompetent cells; ~~and~~

~~(4) Partial amino acid sequence~~

~~Possessing a part or the whole of the amino  
acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the Xaa  
in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr.~~

3 (Currently amended). A purified interferon-gamma  
(IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing protein, which is a variant of an  
interferon-gamma production inducing protein, also known as  
IGIF and IL-18, and which has ~~having~~ the following  
physicochemical properties:

(1) Molecular weight

Appln. No.: 09/373,230  
Amdt. dated August 19, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of March 21, 2003

19,000±5,000 daltons on gel filtration and  
sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel  
electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE);

(2) Isoelectric point (pI)

4.8 ± 1.0 on chromatofocusing;

(3) Biological activity

Inducing the interferon- $\gamma$  production by  
immunocompetent cells; and

(4) Partial amino acid sequence

Possessing a part or the whole of the amino  
acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the Xaa  
in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr,

wherein said variant [[has]] is a sequence variant of SEQ ID NO:2 which corresponds to an [[the]] amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, which is obtainable by replacing [[with]] at least one amino acid residue in SEQ ID NO:2 ~~replaced~~ with a different amino acid or by deleting or adding at least one amino acid residue ~~deleted or added~~ in the N-terminal region of or to the N-terminus of SEQ ID NO:2 while not substantially altering the above physicochemical property (3) properties of the protein.

4(Previously presented). The purified protein  
according to claim 3, wherein said variant has at least one

Appln. No.: 09/373,230  
Amdt. dated August 19, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of March 21, 2003

amino acid residue in SEQ ID NO:2 replaced with a different amino acid residue.

5(Previously presented). The purified protein according to claim 3, wherein said variant has at least one amino acid residue deleted or added to the N-terminus of SEQ ID NO:2.

6(Previously presented). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the protein of claim 3.

7(Previously presented). A purified interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, where Xaa represents methionine or threonine.

8(Previously presented). An interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing agent which consists essentially of, as an effective ingredient, the protein of claim 7.

9(Original). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the protein of claim 7.

Claim 10 (Cancelled)

Appln. No.: 09/373,230  
Amdt. dated August 19, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of March 21, 2003

11 (Currently amended). A purified interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which has the following physicochemical properties:

(1) Molecular weight

19,000 $\pm$ 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE);

(2) Isoelectric point (pI)

4.8  $\pm$  1.0 on chromatofocusing;

(3) Biological activity

Inducing the interferon- $\gamma$  production by immunocompetent cells; and

(4) Partial amino acid sequence

Possessing a part or the whole of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr,

and which reacts with a monoclonal antibody specific to an interferon-gamma production inducing protein having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 or a sequence variant of the protein having one or more of the same antigenic fragments [[of]] as in the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 and ~~an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 with at least one amino acid residue in SEQ ID NO:2 replaced with a different amino acid, or at least one amino acid residue deleted or added to~~

Appln. No.: 09/373,230  
Amdt. dated August 19, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of March 21, 2003

~~the N terminus of SEQ ID NO:2, while not substantially  
altering the physicochemical properties of the protein.~~

Claims 12 and 13 (Cancelled)

14(Previously presented). A purified interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing protein capable of inducing interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production by immunocompetent cells, wherein said protein is encoded by a DNA sequence which hybridizes to an oligonucleotide probe of SEQ ID NO:5 under the hybridization conditions of 5 x SSPE, 5 x Denhardt's solution, 0.5 w/v% SDS, 100  $\mu$ g/ml denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 45°C and after being washed with 6 x SSC.

15(Original). A pharmaceutical composition, comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the protein of claim 14.

16(New). An isolated interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which substantially retains its interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing activity even after treatment with SDS-PAGE.

17(New). A pharmaceutical composition, comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the protein of claim 16.